

Customized FORM PTO-1390 (Rev 12-2001)		U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE		ATTORNEY DOCKET NO P07566US00/BAS	
TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US) CONCERNING A FILING UNDER 35 U.S.C. 371				U.S. APPLICATION NO (If known, see 37 CFR 1.5)	
				10/088174	
INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/FR00/02545		INTERNATIONAL FILING DATE 15 SEPTEMBER 2000		PRIORITY DATE CLAIMED 17 SEPTEMBER 1999	
TITLE OF INVENTION: EXTRUSIBLE THERMOPOLASTIC MATERIAL AND FIBER MICROMODULE ...					
APPLICANT(S) FOR DO/EO/US: DUCROIX, Bertrand et al.					
Applicant herewith submits to the US Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information.					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1. This is a FIRST submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. This is a SECOND or SUBSEQUENT submission of items concerning a filing under 35 USC 371. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3. This is an express request to begin national examination procedures (35 USC 371(f)). The submission must include items (5), (6), (9) and (21) indicated below. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4. The US has been elected by the expiration of 19 months from the priority date (Article 31). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5. A copy of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371 (c)(2)) <input type="checkbox"/> a. is attached hereto (required only if not communicated by the International Bureau). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a. is attached hereto (required only if not communicated by the International Bureau). <input type="checkbox"/> c. is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6. An English translation of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7. Amendments to the claims of the International Appln. under PCT Article 19 (35 USC 371 (c)(3)) <input type="checkbox"/> a. are attached hereto (required only if not communicated by the International Bureau). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> b. have been communicated by the International Bureau. <input type="checkbox"/> c. have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has NOT expired. <input type="checkbox"/> d. have not been made and will not be made. <input type="checkbox"/> 8. An English translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)). <input type="checkbox"/> 9. An oath or declaration of the inventor(s) (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(4)). <input type="checkbox"/> 10. An English translation of the annexes to the Int'l Pre. Exam. Report under PCT Article 36 (35 USC 371(c)(5)). Items 11. to 20. below concern document(s) or information included: <input type="checkbox"/> 11. An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 C.F.R. 1.97 and 1.98. <input type="checkbox"/> 12. An Assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 CFR 3.28 and 3.31 is included. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 13. A First preliminary amendment . <input type="checkbox"/> 14. A Second or Subsequent preliminary amendment. <input type="checkbox"/> 15. A substitute specification. <input type="checkbox"/> 16. A change of power of attorney and/or address letter. <input type="checkbox"/> 17. A computer-readable form of the sequence listing in accordance with PCT Rule 13ter.2 & 35 USC 1 821-825. <input type="checkbox"/> 18. A second copy of the published international application under 35 USC 154(d)(4). <input type="checkbox"/> 19. A second copy of the English translation of the international application under 35 USC 154(d)(4). <input type="checkbox"/> 20. Other items or information: <input type="checkbox"/> A copy of the Notification of Missing Requirements under 35 U.S.C. 371. <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In the event that a petition for extension of time is required to be submitted herewith, and in the event that a separate petition does not accompany this response, applicant hereby petitions under 37 CFR 1 136(a) for an extension of time of as many months as are required to render this submission timely. Any fee is authorized in 17(c).					
Date: 15 March 2002					

JC13 Rec'd PCT/PTO 15 MAR 2002

U.S. APPLICATION NO. (if known) 10/088174		INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO PCT/FR00/02545		ATTORNEY DOCKET NO P07556US00/BAS											
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 21. The following fees are submitted: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Basic National Fee (37 CFR 1.492 (a) (1)-(5): <table border="0"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Neither Int'l Prelim. Exam. fee nor Int'l Search fee paid to USPTO</td> <td>\$1040</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Search Report has been prepared by the EPO or JPO</td> <td>\$ 890</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> No Int'l Prelim. Ex. fee paid to USPTO but Int'l Search fee paid to USPTO</td> <td>\$ 740</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO</td> <td>\$ 710</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Int'l Prelim. Ex. fee paid to USPTO & all claims satisfied PCT Art 33(1)-(4)</td> <td>\$ 100</td> </tr> </table>				<input type="checkbox"/> Neither Int'l Prelim. Exam. fee nor Int'l Search fee paid to USPTO	\$1040	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Search Report has been prepared by the EPO or JPO	\$ 890	<input type="checkbox"/> No Int'l Prelim. Ex. fee paid to USPTO but Int'l Search fee paid to USPTO	\$ 740	<input type="checkbox"/> International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO	\$ 710	<input type="checkbox"/> Int'l Prelim. Ex. fee paid to USPTO & all claims satisfied PCT Art 33(1)-(4)	\$ 100	CALCULATIONS PTO USE ONLY	
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Total Claims	11 - 20 =		X \$18 =	\$											
Independent Claims	03 - 03 =		X \$84 =	\$											
<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple Dependent Claim(s) (if applicable)			+ \$280 =	\$											
TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS =				\$ 890											
<input type="checkbox"/> Applicant claims small entity status. See 37 CFR 1.27. The fees indicated above are reduced by 1/2.				\$											
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Amount to be				Refunded	\$										
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a. A check in the amount of \$ 890 to cover the above fees is enclosed. <input type="checkbox"/> b. Please charge my Deposit Account No. 12-0555 in the amount of \$ to cover the above fees. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> c. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees required or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 12-0555.															
Note: Where an appropriate time limit under 37 CFR 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 CFR 1.137(a) or (b)) must be filed and granted to restore the application to pending status.															
SEND ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:			SIGNATURE: <u>Douglas E Jackson</u>												
B. Aaron Schulman At the address (below) of CUSTOMER NO. 00881. LARSON & TAYLOR, PLC 1199 NORTH FAIRFAX ST. SUITE 900 ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314			NAME: Douglas E. Jackson REG. NO.: 28518 PHONE NO.: 703-739-4900 Date: 15 March 2002												

10088174 10/088174

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Preliminary amendment

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re application of

DUCROIX et al.

Corresponding to PCT/FR00/02545

Filed 09/14/2000

For: **EXTRUSIBLE THERMOPLASTIC MATERIAL AND FIBER MICROMODULE
MADE FROM SAME**

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

To Honorable Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 2023

SIR:

Prior to examination, please amend the application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS

Delete claims 1-10, all claims in the case, without prejudice
or disclaimer, and insert claims 11-21 as indicated in
attachment A.

REMARKS

The claims of PCT application have been replaced with claims
more in compliance with US PTO practice, without multiple

dependences. An earlier and favorable action allowing such claims is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 3/15/02

By: Douglas E. Jackson
Douglas E. Jackson
Reg. No. 28518

LARSON & TAYLOR, PLC

TRANSPOTOMAC PLAZA
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SUITE 900
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

CLEAN COPY OF SUBSTITUTE CLAIMS 11 - 21

11/ An extrudable material suitable for making thin films, the material including :

a thermoplastic polymer phase containing at least one thermoplastic olefin polymer, and

a content of filler lying in the range 25% to 65% by weight of the composition,

said material having a tensile strength lying in the range 6 MPa to 20 MPa and an amount of extension at breakage lying in the range 50% to 300%.

12/ A material according to claim 11, having a hardness lying in the range 35 to 55 Shore D.

13/ A material according to claim 11, wherein said thermoplastic olefin polymer is selected from the group consisting of:

- PE: polyethylene;
- PP: polypropylene;
- EPR: ethylene propylene rubber;
- EPDM: ethylene propylene diene monomer;
- EVA: copolymers of ethylene and lower alkyl acetates;
- EBA: copolymers of ethylene and lower alkyl acrylates;
- EEA: ethylene ethyl acrylate;
- EMA: ethylene methyl acrylate;
- VLDPE: very low density polyethylene;
- acrylic acid or maleic anhydride grafted polymers;
- PVC: polyvinyl chloride; and
- mixtures and copolymers thereof.

14/ A material according to claim 11, wherein the filler is selected from the group constituted by hydrated or non hydrated alumina, chalk, kaolin, talc, silicon, magnesium hydroxide, and mixtures thereof.

15/ A material according to claim 11, wherein:

the thermoplastic olefin polymer is an ethylene copolymer selected from the group consisting of copolymers of ethylene and lower alkyl acetates having no more than 30% vinyl acetate comonomer, EBA, ethylene ethyl acrylate, ethylene methyl acrylate and mixtures thereof, and

said thermoplastic polymer phase further comprises at least one polymer selected from the group consisting of polyethylene; polypropylene; ethylene propylene rubber; ethylene propylene diene monomer; very low density polyethylene (VDPE); acrylic acid or maleic anhydride grafted polymers; and polyvinyl chloride.

16/ A material according to claim 15, devoid of crosslinking agents, comprising:

- 50 parts of said polyethylene having specific gravity of 0.92 and a melt flow index at 190° under 21.6 N of 1.8 g/10 min;
- 50 parts of said EVA copolymer containing 18% vinyl acetate; and
- 130 parts alumina hydrate.

17/ A material according to claim 15, comprising, in addition to a minor amount of lubricant and additives:

- 50 parts of polyethylene having specific gravity of 0.92 with a melt flow index at 190° under 21.6 N of 1.8 g/10 min;
- 50 parts EVA copolymer containing 18% vinyl acetate; and
- 130 parts calcium carbonate.

18/ An extrudable material suitable for making thin films, the material including:

a thermoplastic polymer phase containing at least one ethylene copolymer, and

a content of filler lying in the range 25% to 65% by weight of the composition,

said material having a tensile strength lying in the range 6 MPa to 20 MPa and an amount of extension at breakage lying in the range 50% to 300%.

19/ An extrudable material according to claim 18, wherein:

said ethylene copolymer is selected from the group consisting of ethylene - lower alkyl acetate copolymer, ethylene - lower alkyl acrylate copolymer, and mixtures thereof, and

said thermoplastic polymer phase further comprises at least one polymer selected from the group consisting of polyethylene; polypropylene; ethylene propylene rubber; ethylene propylene diene monomer; very low density polyethylene (VDPE); acrylic acid or maleic anhydride grafted polymers; polyvinyl chloride; and mixtures thereof/

20/ An extrudable material according to claim 18, wherein said ethylene copolymer has a monomer content not exceeding 30%.

21/ An optical fiber micromodule comprising:

a bundle of optical fibers each having a sheath, and
a film extruded over said bundle and surrounding said bundle, said film being of a material comprising

a polymer phase including at least a thermoplastic ethylene polymer, and

at least a filler content lying in the range 25% to 65% by weight of the composition,

said film of said material having a tensile strength lying in the range 6 MPa to 20 MPa and an amount of extension at rupture lying in the range 50% to 300%.

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AN EXTRUDABLE THERMOPLASTIC MATERIAL AND A FIBER
MICROMODULE MADE FROM SUCH A MATERIAL

The present invention relates to an extrudable material suitable for making thin films, the material including an olefin polymer. A major, although non-exclusive, application of the invention lies in making the sheaths of sheathed optical fiber micromodules suitable for incorporation in a cable such as the cable described in document EP-A-0 468 878, to which reference can be made.

In certain applications, and in particular when making micromodules comprising a bundle of sheathed optical fibers in mutual contact enclosed together with a sealing gel inside an extruded support covering, it is desirable to satisfy conditions which are contradictory to some extent. For example, particularly when making micromodules, it is often desirable to achieve the following simultaneously:

- suitability for extrusion as a film that is thin (if possible about 0.1 mm thick);
- compatibility between the material and the usual sealing gels;
- sufficient strength for the material once in the form of a thin film to make handling possible during subsequent operations without any risk of tearing;
- no adhesion between the film of the micromodule sheath and the fibers during the heating that occurs when the outer covering of thermoplastic material is put into place;
- a proper cylindrical shape is maintained during manufacture of the micromodule and while micromodules are being assembled together to make up a cable;
- little shrinkage during extrusion of the sheath to make the micromodule or during cooling, so as to avoid stressing the optical fibers;
- the material should be easy to color so as to enable the micromodules to be identified;

· the material should be stretchable to a limited extent only so as to make it easy to strip a micromodule in order to prepare its ends for fiber connection; and

· a high degree of resistance to the chemicals used during the operations that are preformed on cables, for example resistance to cleaning solvents.

When manufacturing optical fiber cables, some of the above characteristics are essential, in particular mechanical strength, including during thermal aging, and compatibility with sealing gels and cleaning solvents used for removing gel and dirt prior to connecting the optical fibers to a connector. However mechanical strength is unfavorable to ease of use since a strong sheathing film that presents a high level of breaking elongation makes it difficult to strip micromodules in order to release the end portions of the fibers.

An electrically insulating material is already known (GB-A-2 110 696) that comprises an alloy of polymers that are crosslinked at least in part, containing in particular a copolymer of ethyl alkyl acetate (EVA) having more than 40% vinyl acetate with inorganic fillers at a concentration sufficient to make the material fireproof. Crosslinking is for the purpose of making it possible to have a high concentration of fillers.

The present invention seeks in particular to provide a material that can be extruded as a thin film and that presents a satisfactory compromise between the various results to be achieved. For this purpose, the invention proposes in particular a material that can be extruded as a thin film, the material being constituted by a composition containing at least one (and possibly a plurality of) practically non-crosslinked thermoplastic olefin polymer and a filler content lying in the range 25% to 65% by weight of the composition, said material in the non-divided state having traction strength lying in the range 6 megapascals (MPa) to 20 MPa and breaking elongation lying in the range 50% to 300%.

The term "practically non-crosslinked" is used to mean a polymer that is described in that way in the trade, and consequently having no appreciable degree of crosslinking and containing no crosslinking agents such as peroxides, other than in trace amounts.

Because of the absence of any crosslinking, the presence of "gels" is avoided, where such gels impede thin-film extrusion, and post-extrusion shrinkage which would give rise to stress on the fibers is reduced.

The hardness of the material on the Shore D scale advantageously lies in the range 35 to 55.

When using the material to make a micromodule sheath, selecting hardness on the Shore D scale that exceeds 35 makes it possible to guarantee a satisfactory cylindrical shape and to avoid the "kinking" effect whereby a sharp bend or "kink" can form during the bending that is necessary for making connections.

Because of the limited breaking elongation, due in particular to the presence of the filler, stripability is satisfactory and there is no need to have recourse to special tools. The above minimum characteristics, and in particular traction strength and breaking elongation ensure that the material is not excessively fragile during handling. In particular, the above minima make it possible to perform the handling required for cable manufacture or for making connections without excessive risk of damage.

The above-mentioned minimum filler concentration serves to reduce expansion and contraction of the materials during the variations in temperature that occur during cable manufacture. The presence of a sufficient quantity of fillers makes it possible to avoid any risk of the micromodules sticking to one another, to the sheathed fibers, or to an outer covering.

The fillers used are generally mineral fillers. In particular, it is possible to use (optionally hydrated) alumina, chalk, kaolin, talc, silica, magnesium

hydroxide, and mixtures thereof. All of these fillers reduce breaking elongation and expansion or contraction during temperature variations. Furthermore, they increase thermal inertia and heat capacity. The maximum
5 filler concentration mentioned above enables viscosity to be maintained at a level which is compatible with extruding a thin film.

Suitable olefin polymers are substantially the same as those commonly used at present. In particular,
10 mention can be made of the following substances:

- PE: polyethylenes;
- PP: polypropylenes;
- EPR: ethylene propylene rubber;
- EPDM: ethylene propylene diene monomer;
- 15 • EVA: copolymers of ethylene and lower alkyl acetates (in particular vinyl acetate);
- EBA: copolymers of ethylene and lower alkyl acrylates;
- EEA: ethylene ethyl acrylate;
- 20 • EMA: ethylene methyl acrylate;
- VLDPE: very low density polyethylene;
- acrylic acid or maleic anhydride grafted polymers;
- PVC: polyvinyl chloride;
- mixtures and copolymers thereof.

25 The various polymers are not fully equivalent to one another. Often a mixture of olefin polymers should be used where one of the components is PE or PP and the other is selected from the other polymers mentioned above.

30 If the second polymer is EVA, then a compound should be used having no more than 30% of the vinyl acetate comonomer in order to conserve sufficient hardness and mechanical characteristics. EBA, EEA, and EMA have properties similar to EVA. EPR and EPDM should
35 be used with concentrations of ethylene that are high enough to prevent them having properties that come close to those of an elastomer.

When using a polymer made up firstly of PE or PP and secondly of EVA copolymer, it is advantageous to use a composition having 40% to 80% EVA.

5 In general, the extrudable material should also include a low concentration (not exceeding a few percent by weight) of plasticizing agents such as aliphatic oils or phthalates (e.g. dioctyl or didecyl phthalate), adipates, trimellitates, etc.

10 Substances for providing protection against heat or ultraviolet radiation are incorporated when exposure to sunlight is to be expected.

In some cases, one or more silanes or aminosilanes should be added, such as:

- vinyl trimethoxysilane;
- 15 • amino propylsilane;
- amino trimethoxysilane.

If trialkoxy silane is used, it is desirable to avoid using compounds having more than five carbon atoms.

20 Silanes serve to reinforce bonding between the filler and the polymer.

In the absence of a crosslinking agent, silane does not run any risk of giving rise to crosslinking which in addition would not be possible when using the material for making optical fiber sheaths, since the temperatures
25 required for crosslinking are then not reached during extrusion.

The invention also provides an optical fiber micromodule comprising a bundle of optical fibers and a sheath surrounding the bundle that is made of a thin film
30 of an extrudable material, the micromodule being characterized in that the sheath is constituted by a composition containing a thermoplastic olefin polymer and a filler content lying in the range 25% to 65% by weight of the composition, said material in the non-divided
35 state having traction strength lying in the range 6 MPa to 20 MPa and breaking elongation lying in the range 50% to 300%.

The properties of several materials in accordance with the invention are given below by way of example together with a comparison with a reference material conventionally used at present for making micromodule sheaths.

The description refers to the sole figure which shows a micromodule in a deformed state that it is likely to take up when pressed against other micromodules by an outer covering.

The micromodule comprises a plurality of individually-sheathed optical fibers 10 contained in a sheath 12 which needs to be easily torn so as to enable the ends of the fibers to be stripped for connection purposes. The sheath 12 is generally constituted by being extruded onto the bundle of optical fibers 10 while they are being drawn down, and it then takes on a shape that is approximately circular providing the outline presented by the bundle of fibers is itself not too far removed from the circumscribing circle. The sheath presses tightly against the fibers and causes them to press against one another. Within a cable, the pressure exerted by micromodules on one another can deform the sections of the micromodules and can cause them to take up the shape as shown, for example.

The reference material was constituted by polyethylene having nominal specific gravity of 0.92 and a melt flow index of 0.3 grams per 10 minutes (g/10 min) at 190°C under a pressure of 21.6 newtons (N). That material was used to make a micromodule sheath by being extruded onto a bundle of four optical fibers. The sheath 12 made in that way had a diameter of 1 millimeter (mm) and a thickness of 0.12 mm. Extrusion took place without difficulty and the resulting sheath was indeed cylindrical. However, while the cable was being made up, by extruding an outer covering based on polyethylene, the heat required for extruding the covering deformed the micromodules and their sheaths tended to stick to one

another and to the outer covering, thus requiring special precautions to be taken such as interposing one or more separator tapes between the micromodules and the covering.

- 5 Those difficulties are avoided when using a material in accordance with the invention.

Example 1

10 A mixer was used to prepare a composition comprising the following by weight:

- 50 parts of polyethylene having specific gravity of 0.92 and a melt flow index at 190° under 21.6 N of 1.8 g/10 min;

15 • 50 parts EVA copolymer containing 18% vinyl acetate;

- 130 parts alumina hydrate;

- 5 parts lubricant (paraffin oil); and

- 5 parts additives (antioxidizers, silane, lubricant).

20 The ingredients were mixed for 10 minutes up to 160°C.

25 After calendaring on a cylinder mixer, the material was cut up and then molded under pressure at 180°C into the form of plates suitable for performing measurements for characterizing the material.

 The mechanical characteristics obtained on the plates were as follows:

- breaking strength = 11.4 MPa;

- breaking elongation = 125%;

30 • hardness = 45 on the Shore D scale.

 The composition was used for making micromodules. For that purpose, it was converted into granules which were inserted into an extruder having a diameter of 45 mm, and a length of 24 diameters.

35 Extrusion temperatures lay in the range 130°C to 165°C going from the feed hopper to the extrusion head.

In order to characterize the resulting sheath, two operations were performed.

The first was forming at a speed of 100 meters per minute (m/min) in order to obtain a tube having an
5 outside diameter of 0.90 mm and a radial thickness of 0.12 mm.

For the second operation, the forming was identical to the above except that four colored optical fibers were introduced through the extruder head and a sealing gel
10 was injected simultaneously so as to form a module which, once the extruded material had cooled, was collected in a bin where it was allowed to coil freely while flat.

The characteristics obtained on the sheaths were as follows:

15

	Module without sealing gel	Module with gel
Initial characteristics	BS = 4.5N BE = 138%	BS = 4.6N BE = 112%
Winding on a 6D mandrel	OK	OK
After 10 days at 70°C	δ BS = 19% δ BE = 15%	δ BS = 13% δ BE = 13%
After 10 days at 70°C + 42 days at 80°C	δ BS = 17% δ BE = 20%	δ BS = 9 δ BE = 11%

BS: breaking strength expressed in Newtons

BE: breaking elongation, expressed in %

δ : change

20

These results show that sheaths made of the material of the invention present firstly good resistance to heating, and secondly good compatibility with the filler materials.

Example 2

The composition of the material was identical to that of Example 1, except that the filler based on hydrated alumina was replaced by a filler based on calcium carbonate. Mixing was performed under the same conditions, and a micromodule having a diameter of 0.8 mm and a thickness of 0.11 mm was extruded at 100 m/min. The characteristics below show how such a formulation provides modules having adequate chemical resistance in spite of the small thickness of the module sheath.

Initial characteristics	BS = 3.9N	BE = 155%
After 1 hour in ethanol at 20°C	δ BS = 1%	δ BE = 3%
After 1 hour in isopropanol at 20°C	δ BS = 5%	δ BE = 3%

Example 3

A formulation identical to Example 1 was made except that the alumina-based filler was replaced by a kaolin filler, and its concentration was reduced to 65 parts. The paraffin plasticizer was replaced by an oil of the isononyl adipate type.

The various ingredients were introduced into an internal mixer, mixed at up to about 160°C, and granulated. The characteristics of the material in plate form were as follows:

Initial mechanical characteristics	BS = 10.5 MPa	BE = 157%
10 days aging at 70°C	δ BS = +1%	δ BE = -13%
42 days of aging at 80°C	δ BS = +7%	δ BE = -19%
Compatibility with Macroplast CF 300 jelly 10 days at 70°C	δ BS = -15%	δ BE = -18% Change in mass = 7%
Ability to withstand humidity at high temperature, 42 days at 40°C and 93% relative humidity	δ BS = -4%	δ BE = -+2%
24 hours immersion in lamp oil at 20°C	δ BS = -25%	δ BE = -10%
1 hour immersion in ethanol at 20°C	δ BS = -4%	δ BE = -10%
1 hour immersion in isopropanol at 20°C	δ BS = -6%	δ BE = -4%
1 hour immersion in isopropanol at 20°C	δ BS = -4%	δ BE = -10%
Hardness	45 on the Shore D scale	

Using the same formulation, a micromodule having four optical fibers was made under the same conditions as before to have a 0.11 mm thick sheath with a diameter of 0.85 mm. The sealing gel was "Macroplast CF 300" from Henkel.

The mechanical characteristics (mech. ch.) obtained on the module were as follows:

Initial mech. ch.	BS = 2.4N	BE = 105%
Changes in mech. ch. after 10 days at 70°C	δ BS = 5%	δ BE = 4%
Changes in mech. ch. after 10 days at 70°C in Macroplast CF 300	δ BS = 0	δ BE = 6%
Changes in mech. ch. after 42 days at 80°C	δ BS = 2%	δ BE = 5%
Changes in mech. ch. after 10 days at 70°C in CF 300, and 42 days at 80°C	δ BS = -21%	δ BE = -6%
Changes in mech. ch. after 42 days at 40°C and 93% relative humidity	δ BS = 5.4%	δ BE = 0%
Changes in mech. ch. after 24h in lamp oil	δ BS = 11%	δ BE = 25%
Changes after 24 hours in ethanol	δ BS = 8%	δ BE = 12%
Changes after 24 hours in isopropanol	δ BS = 4%	δ BE = 13%

CLAIMS

- 1/ An extrudable material suitable for making thin films, the material including at least one olefin polymer, and being characterized in that it is constituted by a composition containing at least one practically non-crosslinked thermoplastic olefin polymer and a filler content lying in the range 25% to 65% by weight of the composition, said material in the non-divided state having traction strength lying in the range 6 MPa to 20 MPa and breaking elongation lying in the range 50% to 300%.
- 2/ A material according to claim 1, characterized in that it presents hardness lying in the range 35 to 55 on the Shore D scale.
- 3/ A material according to claim 1 or claim 2, characterized in that the polymer is selected from the group constituted by:
- PE: polyethylenes;
 - PP: polypropylenes;
 - EPR: ethylene propylene rubber;
 - EPDM: ethylene propylene diene monomer;
 - EVA: copolymers of ethylene and lower alkyl acetates (in particular vinyl acetate);
 - EBA: copolymers of ethylene and lower alkyl acrylates;
 - EEA: ethylene ethyl acrylate;
 - EMA: ethylene methyl acrylate;
 - VLDPE: very low density polyethylene;
 - acrylic acid or maleic anhydride grafted polymers;
 - PVC: polyvinyl chloride;
 - mixtures and copolymers thereof.
- 4/ A material according to claim 1, 2, or 3, characterized in that the filler is selected from the group constituted by (optionally hydrated) alumina,

chalk, kaolin, talc, silicon, magnesium hydroxide, and mixtures thereof.

- 5/ A material according to any preceding claim,
5 characterized in that the polymer is a mixture of olefin polymers comprising one component which is PE or PP and another selected from EVA having no more than 30% vinyl acetate comonomer, EBA, EEA, and EMA, possibly also with a lubricant and additives.
- 10 6/ A material according to any preceding claim, characterized in that, in addition optionally to a lubricant and additives other than crosslinking agents, it comprises:
- 15 · 50 parts of polyethylene having specific gravity of 0.92 and a melt flow index at 190° under 21.6 N of 1.8 g/10 min;
 · 50 parts EVA copolymer containing 18% vinyl acetate; and
- 20 · 130 parts alumina hydrate.
- 7/ A material according to any one of claims 1 to 4, characterized in that, in addition to a lubricant and additives, it comprises:
- 25 · 50 parts of polyethylene having specific gravity of 0.92 with a melt flow index at 190° under 21.6 N of 1.8 g/10 min;
 · 50 parts EVA copolymer containing 18% vinyl acetate; and
- 30 · 130 parts calcium carbonate.
- 8/ A material according to any one of claims 1 to 4, characterized in that, in addition to a lubricant and additives, it comprises:
- 35 · 50 parts of polyethylene having specific gravity of 0.92 with a melt flow index at 190° under 21.6 N of 1.8 g/10 min;

- 50 parts EVA copolymer containing 18% vinyl acetate; and
- 65 parts kaolin.

5 9/ A material according to any one of claims 1 to 7, containing one or more silanes or aminosilanes.

10 10/ An optical fiber micromodule comprising a bundle of optical fibers and a sheath surrounding the bundle that is made of a thin film of an extrudable material, the micromodule being characterized in that the sheath is constituted by a composition containing a thermoplastic olefin polymer and a filler content lying in the range 25% to 65% by weight of the composition, said material in
15 the non-divided state having traction strength lying in the range 6 MPa to 20 MPa and breaking elongation lying in the range 50% to 300%.

15

A B S T R A C T

AN EXTRUDABLE THERMOPLASTIC MATERIAL AND A FIBER
MICROMODULE MADE FROM SUCH A MATERIAL

5

The material enables thin films to be made. It is
constituted by a composition containing an olefin polymer
and a filler content lying in the range 25% to 65% by
weight of the composition, said material in the non-
divided state having traction strength lying in the range
6 MPa to 20 MPa and breaking elongation lying in the
range 50% to 300%.

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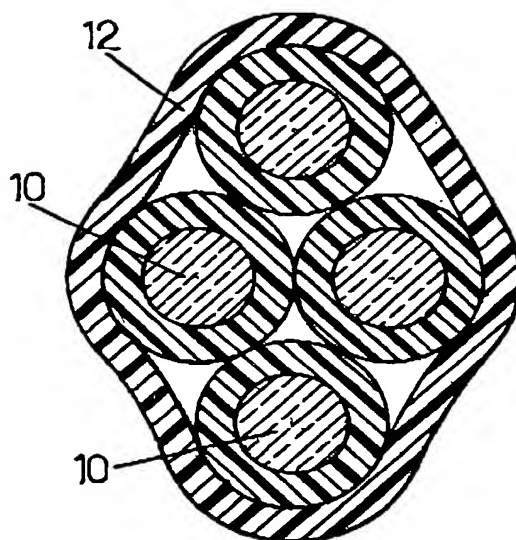
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Translation of the title and the abstract as published by the PCT Authorities,
possibly after making changes, ex officio, e.g. under PCT Rules 37.2, 38.2, and/or
48.3.

10/088174



DECLARATION FOR USA PATENT APPLICATION

(including Design and National Stage PCT)

Attorney's Docket ID: _____

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below adjacent to my name. I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought

on the invention entitled: An extrudable thermoplastic material and a fiber micromodule made from such a material.

the specification of which: _____

☒ is attached hereto.

(or)

_____ was filed on _____

as U.S. Application No. or PCT International Application No. FR00/02545

and (if applicable) was amended on _____

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment specifically referred to above. I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in 37 CFR 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d) or 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or 365(a) of any PCT International application which designated at least one country other than the United States of America, listed below and have also identified below, where priority is not claimed, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate, or any PCT International application, having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed (____ ADDITIONAL APPLICATIONS IDENTIFIED ON ATTACHED SHEET)

Prior Foreign Application No.

99 11649

Country

FRANCE

Day/Month/Year Filed

17th September 1999

Priority Not Claimed

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. 120 of any U.S. application(s), or 365(c) of any PCT application designating the U.S., listed below; and insofar as the subject matter of each claim of this application is not disclosed in the prior U.S. or PCT application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in 37 CFR 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT filing date of this application. (____ ADDITIONAL APPLICATIONS IDENTIFIED ON ATTACHED SHEET.)

U.S. or PCT Parent Application No.

FR00/02545

Parent Filing Date (Day/Month/Year)

14th September 2000

Parent Patent No. (if applicable)

As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the registered practitioners of **LARSON & TAYLOR** associated with Customer Number **000881** to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith. Direct all correspondence to that Customer Number.

Direct all telephone calls to _____

at TEL (703) 739-4900 (Fax: 703-739-9577) e-mail: _____

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under 18 U.S.C. 1000 and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

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